Safety of Women Workers

3176. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to allow women to work in late-night shifts,

(b) if so, whether Government have taken into consideration the negative health impact on women working in late-night shifts, as per study conducted in various foreign countries;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether working in night shift increases a women's risk of developing breast cancer and other cancers and that night shift has the strongest indication of negative effect on pregnancy; and

(e) if so, whether Government would review its decision for the health and safety of women workers?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) On the demands of the Women's Organization and keeping in view the spirit of the International Labour Organization Protocol of 1990 to the Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948 and the present economic globalization, it has been decided to amend Section 66 of the Factories Act, 1948 to allow employment of women workers between 7.00 P.M. and 6.00 A.M. The Bill for the proposed amendment *inter-alia* provide that the occupier has to ensure occuptional safety and adequate protection of the women workers so employed by him.

(b) to (d) Some studies are reported to have associated shift work and night work in particular with sleep difficulties and other medical disorders including increasing risk of developing breast cancer. However, majority of developed countries are found to permit the night shift by women because there is no published evidence for any such condition to be regarded as an absolute reason to exclude them from shift work.

(e) Does not arise.

Opening of Recruiting Agencies

3177. SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of organization/departments under Government that recruit skilled and unskilled labourers for employment abroad;

(b) whether these organizations have feed back from the employees sent abroad through them, about the working conditions there; and

(c) whether Government would open more such recruiting agencies for selecting and providing placement to Indians willing to go abroad for work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Currently, five State Government Undertakings/Agencies have valid Registration Certificates issued under the Emigration Act, 1983 to recruit skilled and unskilled workers for employment abroad. Registration Certificates of four other State Government Agencies have expired as they have not applied for renewal.

(b) Feedback is received from time to time through Indian Missions and emigrant workers about the working and living conditions abroad.

(c) Government does not intent to open recruiting agencies. However, Registration Certificates are issued on application by individuals and organizations under the Emigration Act, 1983. There is no bar on setting up new recruiting agencies.

Women workers in the Country

†3178. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any estimate has been made regarding the number of women workers in the country;

(b) the number of women workers in organized and in unorganized sectors, respectively; and

(c) whether Government have formulated any action plan to improve the conditions of the women workers?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per Union Primary Census Abstract—2001, the total female workers in the country are 127,220,248, which include main and marginal workers. Women employment in the Organised Sector as on 31.03.2002 is 49,35,400.

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.